

By MICHAEL KNOX; Bracknell T. 2, Wycombe W 2 (a.e.t.)

BRACKNELL TOWN came within two minutes of creating one of the biggest amateur football upsets of the season, in Saturday's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup semi-final at Larges Lane. With just those 120 seconds remaining, the Spartan Leaguers were leading 2-1. But a last gasp goal by Tony Amos saved the Blues from a humiliating defeat.

Having been reprieved, Wycombe should now win the replay at Loakes Park on Saturday. But on this form they will stand little chance against their probable final opponents Slough Town, who at the same time, were reaching the last four of the F.A. Amateur Cup.

Wycombe were disappointing, to say the least. Only Larry Pritchard, John Maskell and John Hutchinson emerged with much credit from a lacklustre display. Pritchard was always prompting in mid-field, Maskell brought off one outstanding first half save, and Hutchinson was the only forward to cause the slightest consternation to the reinforced home defence.

Ian MacPhee and his fellow centre-back John Donnachie easily snuffed out the challenge of Amos and a half-fit Tony Horseman, while home full backs Bobby Elderfield and Colin Hopkins rarely looked in trouble.

Although they dominated much of the play territorially, Wycombe were unable to place any sustained pressure of goalkeeper John Alder, who, apart from one or two fine saves, was left relatively unemployed.

However it was the goalkeeper's mistakes, that led to both Wycombe's goals and they must surely press him more in the replay.

At times the sheer determination of Alan Jefferies, and Jimmy Woodcock enabled Bracknell to force the usually reliable Wycombe defence into awkward situations.

In addition Bracknell had the best forward on the field in the strong running Gordon Wilkinson. Turning up on either wing he continually harried Delaney and company, making one goal for Squires and notching the other from the penalty spot after he himself had been brought down.

Recent wet weather made the Larges Lane pitch heavy from the start. But it lasted the course well,

although conditions favoured the home side.

The early stages were marked by a couple of misses by Horseman. Although some of these were only half chances, a fully fit Bodger would have snapped them up eagerly. Instead he was just that fraction too slow to make full use of the situation.

The home side seemed sure to take a shock lead after only eight minutes, when a fierce 20 yard volley by Jefferies sped towards the corner of the net. But Maskell, taking off like a bird, flung himself to his left to tip the shot round for a corner.

Bracknell forced two more corners, and Maskell had to be off his line in a flash to stop a break by Squires, in an uneasy period for Wycombe midway through the half.

But gradually the Isthmian League champions regained control. Delaney headed just over from Amos' corner, Pritchard had a shot blocked while Horseman hit the post from five yards as the Bracknell defence panicked for a rare moment.

Wanderers' defence also had its anxious times before the interval, and at that stage the home side could feel pleased to be still on level terms with their illustrious opponents.

The pattern of entertaining football continued after the interval and eventually Wycombe managed to break through. Williams sent over a free-kick high into the goalmouth. Alder was unable to hold the ball and it fell to Hutchinson, who guided it in from close range.

This gave Blues' the boost they needed and they could have sewn it up in the next 20 minutes. Hutchinson had a shot cleared off the line while Amos shot over after being put through by Pritchard.

Terry Barnard came on for Charlie Gaffney, but Bracknell's

hopes of survival looked slim. However in the last five minutes they produced an all out assault on the Wycombe goal and were rewarded a minute from time.

After Woodcock had found the side netting, Wilkinson set up another attack on the left. He crossed to Squires, who scrambled the ball over the line in the goalmouth melee, thus taking the match into extra time.

The large crowd, which had been silent until then, began to roar. The Bracknell contingent sensed their side were in with a chance, during the remaining 30 minutes. And they were right!

In the 97th minute Woodcock sent Wilkinson charging off down the right. He had already beaten Derek Gamblin, when the full-back comprehensively brought him down. There was no doubt about the penalty decision and Wilkinson picked himself up to slot the spot-kick past Maskell.

Wycombe were stunned. Here they were about to be knocked out of the County Cup by a team from the Spartan League. Ian Rundle replaced the dispirited Horseman as they ploughed towards goal, but the Bracknell defence held firm.

In unbelievable tension, the home side seemed certain to hold out. But then in the 18th minute of this absorbing tie, Wanderers found a way through.

Delaney rose to head Hutchinson's cross against Alder's legs and Amos snapped in the rebound. Wycombe players danced around as if they had just won the Amateur Cup. Instead, all they had achieved was a draw against a side two classes inferior.

Bracknell: J. Alder, B. Elderfield, C. Hopkins, J. Donnachie, I. MacPhee, M. Dewick, J. Woodcock, I. MacPhee, M. Squires, C. Gaffney (sub: T. Barnard 71 mins), G. Wilkinson.

Wycombe: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, D. Gamblin, D. Bullock, J. Delaney, R. Williams, A. Horseman (sub: I. Rundle 105 mins), L. Pritchard, A. Amos, A. Gane, J. Hutchinson.